

Chapter 1 • Our Guiding Directions

MISSION

The mission of the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is to improve the quality of life for individuals and families in need. We will help people achieve safe, self-sufficient, healthy and secure lives.

VISION

Our vision is **a healthy, safe and productive Washington.**

The people we serve are members of families, students in schools, and residents in communities; in most cases, they are more strongly connected to those institutions than they are to DSHS programs.

Therefore, to achieve our mission and vision, we are committed to providing our clients with coordinated services through partnerships with communities, tribes, counties, service providers, schools, the criminal justice system, service providers, and other agencies within private and public sectors.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Below are the guiding principles that direct the department in how we operate and conduct our business.

- Customer focus
- Service coordination
- Responsiveness to diversity
- Strategic thinking
- Collaborative leadership
- Community partnerships
- Accountable performance
- Organization development
- Employee participation
- Result oriented data-based decisions
- Continuous improvement

A BALANCED APPROACH ADDRESSING THE PRIORITIES OF GOVERNMENT

DSHS has been using the Balanced ScoreCard perspectives in developing agency priorities in the last five years. In Chapter 4, each goal is aligned to one or more Balanced ScoreCard perspectives. These perspectives are:

- Public Value
- Customer Perspective
- Financial Perspective
- Internal Process
- Learning and Growth

In addition, during this planning period, the Office of the Financial Management (OFM) is leading the discussions of Priorities of Government (POG) with all state agencies. The POG teams have identified eleven results that are most important to the State of Washington. Although DSHS's work contributes to a number of many POG results, DSHS is actively involved in the work of four of these results:

- Improve the health of Washington citizens
- Improve the security of Washington's vulnerable children and adults
- Improve the safety of people and property
- Increase student achievement in elementary, middle and high schools

In Chapter 4, we use check boxes to indicate how each DSHS goal may contribute to the first three of these POG results where DSHS has most impact.

During the spring and summer of 2004, the POG Result Teams that include representatives from DSHS will review and update the success indicators and strategies of each area of expected results. DSHS will continue these discussions to develop our high level and intermediate level performance measures.

DSHS management team will also explore transformational strategies that may enable the department to more effectively achieve our goals by changing how we run our programs or provide our services.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

RCW (Revised Code of Washington) 43.20A.010 defines the purpose of the department as follows.

The department of social and health services is designed to integrate and coordinate all those activities involving provision of care for individuals who, as a result of their economic, social or health condition, require financial assistance, institutional care, rehabilitation or other social and health services. In order to provide for maximum efficiency of operation consistent with meeting the needs of those served or affected, the department will encompass substantially all of the powers, duties and functions vested by law on June 30, 1970, in the department of public assistance, the department of institutions, the veterans' rehabilitation council and the division of vocational rehabilitation of the coordinating council on occupational education. The department will concern itself with changing social needs, and will expedite the development and implementation of programs designed to achieve its goals. In furtherance of this policy, it is the legislative intent to set forth only the broad outline of the structure of the department, leaving specific details of its internal organization and management to those charged with its administration.

DSHS programs and services are also authorized by many additional federal laws and state laws. More detailed information regarding each program's statutory authority is included in Appendix 1.